

Testimony Regarding the FY24 Operating Budget

Robyn Olivo

Good afternoon. My goal is to advocate for people like me who are supported by the disability subsidies, who would like to work and be an integral part to the county without fear of losing health insurance or housing for wanting to work.

In May of 2011 I had a nervous breakdown and was diagnosed with a mental illness. As a result, I was told that I would be on disability for the rest of my life. While in recovery, I learned how to become a Peer Support Specialist. As excited as I was, I decided to take the Peer Specialist training; however, it took four years before I could work in the field. Once I was able to work full-time, I lost my SSDI, and if I would have kept working, I would have lost my housing voucher.

Living with a mental health issue should not be the end, and a capable person that wants to be a productive member of society should not be in jeopardy of losing their basic needs of health care and housing. If they choose to work, one can only make a certain amount to maintain the subsidy; and, if the benefit is lost, then the person is in fear of getting sick, losing their job and then their housing. It becomes a domino effect. This is a barrier for the individual.

My goal objective is to advocate for people who are supported by the disability subsidies, who want to work and be an integral part of the county without fear of losing health insurance or housing due to working.